



FEMA

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DISASTER NEWS

MORE THAN \$3.8 MILLION IN ASSISTANCE ISSUED TO HOOSIERS IN THE TWO WEEKS FOLLOWING DISASTER DECLARATION

INDIANAPOLIS – Just two weeks after President Bush signed a major disaster declaration for two Indiana counties, nearly 2,000 grants totaling \$3.8 million have been issued, either by check or direct deposit, federal and state recovery officials announced today.

“We’re committed to providing disaster assistance as quickly as possible, and this assistance is an important step in the recovery process,” said Larry Sommers, federal coordinating officer in Indiana for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). “This may just be the first type of assistance that an individual may be eligible to receive.”

To date, approximately 1,914 assistance applications have been processed and \$3,852,378 in assistance grant money has been disbursed to eligible applicants in Vanderburgh and Lake counties who suffered damage or loss in the severe storms and flooding occurring Sept. 12 through 14. Disaster housing assistance comes in the form of grants for temporary housing needs and for homeowners to make essential repairs. This assistance serves as an interim solution for people’s housing needs until long-term solutions are addressed, typically through insurance or low-interest disaster loans.

“At this point in the recovery process our concern is for people’s housing needs,” said Eric Dietz, state coordinating officer and executive director of the Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS). “Our top priority is getting people into safe and sanitary housing so they can get beyond this disaster.”

The following is a snapshot of disaster recovery operations, as of close of business Oct. 19:

- A total of 2,926 Lake and Vanderburgh county residents have registered for federal disaster assistance.
- Under the Individuals and Households Program, \$3,799,123 in housing grants and \$255,841 in Other Needs Assistance (ONA) grants have already been approved. (ONA provides for uninsured or under-insured disaster-related necessary expenses and serious needs, which may include grants for medical, dental, personal property, transportation and other expenses that FEMA approves.)

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- The U.S. Small Business Administration has issued 2,107 low-interest disaster loan applications, including 1,940 to homeowners and renters and 167 to businesses.
- So far, 2,279 inspections have been completed by trained housing inspectors.
- Teams of Community Relations personnel from FEMA and IDHS have been visiting affected communities to inform victims of available assistance and to identify any unmet needs.

Call to Apply

There are two easy ways to begin the application process. Call FEMA at **1-800-621-FEMA (3362)** or **TTY 1-800-462-7585** (for those with a speech or hearing impairment). Both numbers are available from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., seven days a week until further notice. Multilingual operators are available to answer calls. Residents with Internet access may register on the agency's Web site at www.fema.gov where valuable recovery information is also available.

Residents and business owners who previously registered with the American Red Cross, Salvation Army and any another voluntary agency or who have reported damage to county or local officials need to apply for federal and state assistance programs by calling FEMA's toll-free number or registering online.

FEMA's temporary housing assistance and grants for public transportation expenses, medical and dental expenses, and funeral and burial expenses do not require individuals to apply for an SBA loan. However, applicants who receive SBA loan applications must complete and return them to SBA loan officers to be eligible for assistance that covers personal property, vehicle repair or replacement, and moving and storage expenses.

Disaster Recovery Centers

Four Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs) are open in the affected counties, and nearly 500 residents have visited the centers. At the DRCs, visitors can: receive detailed information about state and federal disaster assistance; get help completing low-interest disaster loan applications from the SBA; inquire about the status of an application for federal assistance; receive referrals to American Red Cross and other voluntary organizations to help with immediate unmet needs; and learn about cost-effective measures to reduce the impact of future disaster losses.

DRC Locations:

- **Evansville:** Indiana National Guard Armory, 3300 East Division Street
- **East Chicago:** Public Service Facility (Conference Room), 4444 Railroad Avenue
- **Gary:** Genesis Convention Center, One Genesis Center Plaza (U.S. Hwy 20 & SR 53)
- **Highland:** Lincoln Center, 2450 Lincoln Street

DRC Hours: 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday - Saturday and 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday, until further notice

Disaster Unemployment Assistance

Residents of the designated counties who lost work as a direct result of the severe storms and flooding occurring Sept. 12 – 14 may be eligible to file for disaster unemployment benefits. The Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) program is funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and administered by the Indiana Department of Workforce Development (IDWD). Applications must be submitted no later than Friday, Nov. 10, 2006.

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Residents of Lake and Vanderburgh counties may file their DUA claims at the following locations:

- Lake:** Gary WorkOne, 1776 W. 37th Ave, Gary, IN 46409-1840 (219 981-1520)
Hammond WorkOne, Columbia Plaza Center, 6431 Columbia Ave., Hammond, IN 46320
(219-933-8332)
- Vanderburgh:** WorkOne Evansville, 700 E. Walnut St., Evansville, IN 47713 (812-424-4473)

Payment may be made to an unemployed or self-employed worker if, as a direct result of the disaster, the individual:

- No longer has a job or no longer can perform regular services;
- Is unable to reach a place of work;
- Was to commence work and does not have a job or is unable to reach the job;
- Has become the breadwinner as major support for the household because the head of household died as a direct result of the major disaster; or
- Cannot work because of a disaster-incurred injury.

FEMA manages federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident. FEMA also initiates mitigation activities, works with state and local emergency managers, and manages the National Flood Insurance Program. FEMA became part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security on March 1, 2003.

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